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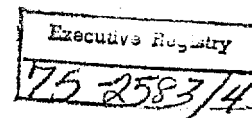
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"OFFICE ON WHEELS"

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 5, 1975



*Jim Wilson*

Mr. William Colby, Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Colby:

Thank you for your response of June 4 to my inquiry regarding the Harper's article by Mr. Samuel Adams on Vietcong troop estimation by the CIA.

Your letter was quite helpful in clarifying some of the key points at issue in this controversy. I have compared your analysis of several of these points with that given by Mr. Adams in his article. From this comparison, I have developed a number of questions exploring the differences between these analyses. I look forward to having your answers to these questions, which are enclosed.

Warm regards,

*Clarence D. Long*  
CLARENCE D. LONG

CDL:pm  
Enclosure

cc: The Honorable George Bush

QUESTIONS FOR MR. COLBY ON CIA'S VC TROOP FIGURES

1. Your letter states that, besides being fragmentary, VC troop estimates from captured documents were unreliable because of the tendency to inflate numbers of troops enlisted, etc. However, the accusation of unreliability should not apply to VC estimates of their own losses.

-- If the total of VC troops was near the CIA's claimed total of 270,000, how do you explain Mr. Adams' point that the VC army would have been quickly decimated by a casualty rate of 150,000 and a desertion rate of 50-100,000 a year?

2. In his article, Mr. Adams states that three of the four components of the VC troop total ("order of battle"), the guerrilla-militia, the service troops, and the political cadres, had by 1967 not been revised since their original calculation in 1964-65.

-- Is this true?

-- If not, when in the interim were they revised?

-- If it is true, how is it justifiable, especially considering the problems Adams claims to have found in the methods by which the troop figures were calculated (Harper's article, p. 62)?

3. Vice-Admiral Rufus Taylor, former deputy director of the CIA from 1966 to 1969, in a letter to Harper's responding to the Adams article, states that "the consensus ... was that VC troop strength was indeed a good deal greater than had been estimated but probably not as great as Sam thought."

-- Why then did the CIA support the military's VC troops estimates of under 300,000, when (according to Vice-Admiral Taylor) the CIA consensus was that such a figure was far too low?

-- Does the CIA now concede that the larger (500-600,000 VC troops) figure was the correct one, in retrospect?

-- Did the CIA accept the higher numbers in the summer of 1967, as claimed by Mr. Adams? In February 1968, after the Tet offensive?

4. In his article, Mr. Adams states that the number of VC agents was nearer 30,000 than the CIA's claim of about 300. He also asserts that the CIA resisted White House attempts to obtain Adams' memo on the 300,000 figure. Your letter does not deal with this statement.

-- Is Mr. Adams' assertion true?

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-- Which figure, according to the information now available, was more accurate?

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
Routing Slip

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	11	LC			
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Remarks: Per your request, attached are items #5 and 6 from the 7 November Director's Daily Journal.

*Adams*

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# EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Remarks:

Response for DCI signature, please.

6 November 1975  
Date

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